

Methodist Magazine and Review.

OCTOBER, 1898.

MOUNTAINEERING BY RAIL.



A COG-WHEEL RAILWAY—MOUNT PILATUS.

Those luxuries of life which are peculiarly connected with the ascent of very high mountains, and with periodic residence in the habitations which crown their summits—luxuries of feeling and luxuries of scene—have, until a comparatively recent date, been only accessible to the physically

strong and mentally resolute. Now, however, the engineer is abroad. Mountaineering has, by the application of mechanical appliances, been made possible to those who are neither physically strong nor mentally resolute; and, though considerations of financial profit, more than a sympathetic desire to put the luxuries of the mountain-top within the reach of the physically weak, may have moved the engineer to activity, still his achievements are a wonderful witness to the mastership of the human mind in its contentions with physical difficulties.

There is nothing particularly skilful in the zig-zag system of mountain railways; and so far from its being the original thought of any particular engineer, this zig-zag system of ascending mountains had its earliest inventors in the beasts of various kinds whose natural homes are in the mountains. Horses and oxen and sheep, which, in the main, are found only in those mountains where man has taken up his abode, adopt the zig-zag method of climbing mountains as naturally as the chamois and the mountain-goat. The common-sense in animals led them to show that the zig-zag path up the mountain-side is easier for ascent than the straight path. In mechanical mountaineering, whether man